

MEDIA RELEASE



16 July 2009

Meet Claremont's CP Week Perth-O-Nality

During National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week (CP Week) over 20 **CP Week Perth-O-Nalities** are celebrating the difference people with CP can make as part of The Centre for Cerebral Palsy's 'You Be the Difference' National Online Campaign.

Seventeen-year-old James from Claremont is one of these outstanding individuals telling his story about how he is 'being the difference' in the WA community by working to make travel and education accessible for people of all abilities.

A seasoned interstate and overseas traveler, James knows first hand the challenges faced by people with disabilities when they travel. With assistance from his parents and sister, James thoroughly enjoys traveling, finding it "a very rich and rewarding experience."

"Unfortunately, not every person with a disability is lucky enough to have such extremely physically fit, strong and capable family members, which is why I would like to make traveling easier, not only for myself, but for other people with disabilities in years to come," James says.

Currently James is conducting research on the travel experiences and needs of people with disabilities in Australia, with the view to develop quality travel opportunities for wheelchair and mobility aid users.

A finalist in the WA Youth Awards, James has not only been commended for his volunteer work with the Salvation Army and commitment to disability education - presenting talks at schools, Universities and state conferences - he is also an advocate

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for people who have disabilities and are undertaking further studies. Through persistence and determination, James revolutionised TAFE's personal care support policy, resulting in the appointment of a Carer and funds to meet the personal care requirements of people with disabilities furthering their education at TAFE.

CEO Judy Hogben says, "The Centre has been working closely with people with CP and their families to help build fulfilling futures for people like James since 1951. It is very rewarding to see people who have more barriers to overcome than most of us do in a lifetime, go on to make substantial differences in our community."

"CP Week gives us the opportunity to acknowledge these people's achievements, their devoted families, the dedicated staff at The Centre and the kind support we have received from the wider community over the past 58 years," Ms Hogben says.

Ms Hogben encourages readers to visit www.youbethedifference.com.au to read how CP Week Perth-O-Nalities like James are making a difference in our community. There is also the opportunity to send a message of support or to make a donation towards equipment and services that can help other children and adults with CP.

The Centre's work in helping to build independent futures for people like James is limited to the funding we receive. He encourages readers to visit www.youbethedifference.com.au and to 'Make a Difference and Donate' as part of this year's National Cerebral Palsy Awareness Week August 2-8.

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For further information contact:

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Photo Opportunity:

James is available for interview and photos

FACTS ABOUT CEREBRAL PALSY

- *CP is a permanent physical condition that affects movement.*
- *In Australia a child is born with CP every 18 hours.*
- *Australians under 18 are three times more likely to be diagnosed with cerebral palsy than cancer.*
- *There is no pre-birth test, no known cure and severity is on the increase.*
- *For most the cause of CP is unknown.*
- *CP is not a disease, it is not contagious.*
- *CP can be as mild as just a weakness in one hand ranging to almost complete lack of movement.*
- *Since 1951 The Cerebral Palsy Association has forged an enviable reputation as one of the leading disability service providers in WA. In line with the outstanding work we do in the area of CP management and support to those with disability, on 13 March 2007 we adopted a new name The Centre for Cerebral Palsy and colourful new logo.*